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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
18 April 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Afro-Asian Conference Developments

The first session of the Afro-Asian conference convened in Bandung promptly at 0900 on 18 April. In a highly charged atmosphere, the six hundred delegates representing twenty-nine nations and more than a half of the world's population gathered in Merdeka Hall--a former Dutch club house--to hear President Sukarno's welcoming address.

Sukarno's speech was intensely nationalistic, denouncing colonialism in "all its forms." One passage, apparently designed to have a double edge, referred to "modern" colonialism which he characterized as the control of a country's economy by a small minority responsive to foreign control. He also cast the Afro-Asian community as a leading force for peace and called for an end to nuclear weapons tests.

Afterwards, Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo of Indonesia was elected president of the conference. He was nominated by Premier Nasr of Egypt who was seconded by Chou En-lai.

In the preliminary negotiations Nehru has been going all out to avoid controversy. He has stated that the conference should confine itself to broad principles on which unanimity can be achieved, and has indicated that even the Manila Pact is too specific an issue for consideration. Nehru has also proposed that opening speeches by chief delegates be dispensed with and be distributed later in printed form.

The Indian viewpoint seems to have prevailed, at least with regard to the agenda. The topics to be discussed cover cultural and economic co-operation, problems of dependent people, human rights, use of nuclear energy, weapons of mass destruction, and the promotion of world peace and co-operation. Moreover, it has been decided that all resolutions be approved unanimously before being adopted.

State Dept. review completed

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There have been indications of considerable anti-Communist sentiment among various delegations. Sir John Kotelawala plans to introduce a peace plan as a substitute to the "five principles." He also remarked that Peiping could demonstrate its good faith by giving up international Communism. Carlos Romulo let it be known that he had found widespread support for his views. Jamali of Iraq has denounced Communism as a new and more deadly form of colonialism. He also defended defensive alliances against the Communists.

Chou En-lai is being protected by the most extraordinary security precautions. There is no definite information of what transpired during his visit in Rangoon, but it was evident that Chou was particularly attentive to Premier Nasr. In Bandung, he has thus far played an unobtrusive role, although he reportedly spoke in favor of coexistence at a "preliminary" meeting. He has put on a pleasant front for the other delegates.

Communist propaganda has been emphasizing three main themes. All were included--at least by inference--in Chou's official statement which was handed out upon his arrival in Djakarta. These are: (1) The United States is responsible for the crash of the Indian plane in the South China Sea; (2) The United States is attempting to sabotage the conference; and (3) Praise for the conference as an expression of Afro-Asian longing for coexistence, free from colonialism. In addition, Peiping has broadcast that it would "welcome trade talks and sign trade agreements...with governments, industrialists and businessmen of all the countries in the Afro-Asian area." The Viet Minh delegation has simply issued a statement expressing hope that the conference will be a success. Soviet President Voroshilov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kuznetsov, and the presidents of three Central Asian Soviet republics have sent their greetings to the conference.

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According to the American embassy in Djakarta, local Chinese Communists "have not been slow to exploit the incident for its emotional value and may attempt to solicit official condolences from the conference itself."

Although an unidentified Arab delegate is quoted as saying that the Arabs would be satisfied, if the conference would merely "take note" of the Palestine problems, others are still indicating an intention to press the matter. Notable among these was Fadhil Jamali of Iraq, who also told the press that Communist as well as Western imperialism should be discussed. When asked about coexistence, Jamali said it was "wonderful but practically not realistic, because the Communists are never at rest."

The American embassy in Karachi reports that Minister of Law Suhrawardy and Finance Minister Chaudri would not be going to Bandung because of the current emergency in Pakistan. The embassy had previously reported that the inclusion of these men--particularly Chaudri--was a very good thing from the Western point of view.

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The Viet Minh delegation is temporarily being headed by Minister of Propaganda Hoang Minh Giam as Pham Van Dong has been delayed by illness. Included in the four-man group is an economic expert and the Chief of the Department of Southeast Asia affairs of the foreign ministry.

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Radio Cairo reports that Nasr has called for a second Afro-Asian conference to be held in Cairo next year. This report contradicts professions of various neutrals, including Nehru, that they are opposed to the formation of a new bloc.

The leader of the Vietnam delegation has stated he would oppose any discussion of the matter of elections in Indochina. They also have criticized the Ho regime as being dictatorial and requested consideration of the refugee problem.

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